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ABSTRACT

Increasingly, principals are being viewed as instructional leaders, professional educators active in initiating and planning teacher development programs. While most principals consider instructional leadership a high priority, they spend much of their time solving routine problems and confronting minor crises. Immediate, short-term responses take precedence over long-term instructional perspectives. School districts are establishing inservice programs to help principals move into new role expectations. This paper investigates the impact of a staff development process, designed for both teachers and principals, on 12 male secondary principals in a large urban school district. The principals had experience ranging from 5 to 21 years and had already undergone a district-operated program of training to become instructional leaders. Respondents' perceptions of the program and its impact on their role were explored by a structured interview process organized around five areas: expectations, time requirements, support and training received, unexpected outcomes, and additional comments. Principals' comments and concerns were classified according to the school of thought or management style represented. Scientific management and organizational development dominated the principals' effectiveness focus, suggesting that principals' concerns were related to control and efficiency and to communications and teamwork. These and other results are discussed at length. Most principals favored the immediate and "do-able" task, realized their organizational linking role, and believed that the staff development program increased their workload and stress. Included are 2 tables and 25 references. (MLH)

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THE IMPACT OF A DISTRICT-WIDE STAFF DEVELOPMENT EFFORT ON SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ROLE

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INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of "A Nation at Risk" (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), the role of the principal as "leader" of the school has come under intense scrutiny. Older concepts of the principal as building manager, the one who maintains order in the organization, have been rejected; in that role, principals could not be expected to effect the changes that were being sought in school buildings and classrooms. Increasingly, the role of the principal has come to be viewed as that of "instructional leader," as professional educator, active in initiating and planning development programs for teachers. In this new role, the principal has been seen as key to the improvement of school outcomes (Featherstone, 1986; Barth, 1981; Rodriguez & Johnstone, 1986; Sweeney, 1982; Persell & Crookson, 1982; DeBevoise, 1984; Mangieri & Arnn, 1985; etc.). The Florida Council on Educational Management (1985) underscores the point.

> Schools make a difference in what students learn ... Unsuccessful schools have been turned into successful schools. Outstanding schools have been seen to slide rapidly into decline. In each case, the rise and fall could be traced to the quality of the principal.

Principals have consistently said that they hold the role of instructional leaders as a high priority (Wolcott, 1973; McCurdy, 1983; Howell, 1985). But, the fact remains that most principals spend much of their time solving routine problems and confronting minor crises (Willower, 1982). Principals focus on immediate and short-term responses, and not on the intermediate and long-term perspective of the instructional leader (Snyder & Johnson, 1983). Instructional leadership has not been an operational priority in the principal's daily routine (Wolcott, 1973; Howell, 1985; McCurdy, 1983). Principals are not actively engaged in the

instructional program of the school (Cotton and Savard, 1980; Persell and Crookson, 1982; Sweeney, 1982; DeBevoise, 1984; Duke, 1983; and Hallinger, Murphy, Weil, Mesa & Mitman, 1983). As noted by Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) and Stow and Manatt (1982), principals have typically held greater control over the organizational management demands of their jobs and less control over instructional functions.

There is acknowledgement in the research of the dilemma facing the principal between demands of building management and the expectations of instructional leadership. and a wide discrepancy exists between the ideal role of the principal and what takes place in the day-to-day operation of a school. Lieberman and Miller (1984) suggest three options available to principals:

1. Maintain the role of manager and resist efforts at change;
2. Live in the middle ground between manager and instructional leader, giving tentative support to innovative programs;
3. Become innovators (instructional leaders), developing long-range plans and creative programs.

Increasingly, school districts are establishing inservice programs to help principals move into new role expectations. Most principals are, in turn, resolving role discrepancies based on their personal perception of organizational effectiveness. The central purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of a staff development process designed for teachers and for principals, on 12 secondary principals in a large urban school district. The principals' perceptions of the programs and its impact on their role were explored.

METHODS

Setting and Subjects

This investigation took place in a large urban school district of 42,000 students, 14,000 of whom attend 11 comprehensive high schools and one special school, grades 9 through 12. The subjects of the study were 12 secondary school building principals (all male) with a wide range of experiences (5 to 21+ years) who had already undergone a district-operated program of training to become instructional leaders. In addition, these principals worked with an experienced staff of teachers (10 to 35 years of service) who had been involved in intensive staff development activities during the preceeding five years.

Instrumentation

Data were collected from the 12 principals through structured individual interviews. The questions were designed to elicit responses that reflected judgements about the staff development program in which the principal and teachers had participated and the principals' reactions to it. Before developing the interview protocol, researchers familiarized themselves with the goals, objectives, and methods used in the staff development programs. In addition, discussions were held with the leaders and planners.

The interview questionnaire was organized to provide information in five areas:

1. Expectations - What did principals expect to happen as a result of the several staff development programs.

2. Time - What administrative problems were created and how much of their time was diverted to making development programs operate?

3. Support and Training - How much support did they receive to help make programs function, and was previous training received beneficial?

4. Unexpected Outcomes - What happened that wasn't expected - both good and bad?

5. Additional Comments - This was an open-ended question whereby principals were encouraged to respond to any aspect of staff development that they had a need to discuss.

Procedures

A letter was sent to each secondary building principal presenting background information, purpose of the study, the promise of confidentiality, and a copy of the questions to be asked during the interview. An interview schedule was prepared a week after the letters were mailed to the principals. All interviews were conducted on site by the two authors. Each interview lasted from one and one-half to two-plus hours. All interviews were audio-taped, and each researcher also took copious notes.

After each interview, a summary was prepared from the researchers' notes and the audio-tapes. The summary was sent to each principal for verification of accuracy. A composite summary was made after receiving a verification of accuracy statement from each principal.

A preliminary analysis of the composite summaries was undertaken, and a list of general findings was generated and presented to the school district.

Data Anaylsis

More than 24 hours of taped interviews were analyzed. Statements indicating principals' perceptions to the inservice program were transcribed verbatim. In addition, an attempt was made to analyze the summary data

using Miles' *Eight Schools of Thought* on organizational effectiveness (see Figure 1). Miles (1980) notes that scholars have been unable to determine organizational effectiveness because criteria for determining effectiveness are a function of the school of thought. How one views the organization has implications for judging and using criteria to determine effectiveness. "Indeed an organization can be effective or ineffective on a number of different facets that may be relatively independent of one another" (Lippitt, Langseth & Mossop, 1985). Staff development programs that are designed to enhance human relations may be viewed as unsuccessful when using goal attainment criteria to determine effectiveness. In contrast, since different criteria may be used to measure effectiveness in studies of organizations it becomes impossible to compare the results of one study with another (Miles, 1980).

For this study we addressed only the principals' perceptions and concerns. Statements, thoughts, and ideas generated through the interview process were matched to an appropriate school of thought. For example, if a principal expected the staff development program to have some effect on student performance (make teachers more responsive to student needs and help teachers to reduce discipline problems), the perception was coded as indicating a Goal Attainment school of thought, suggesting that the administrator might view effectiveness in terms of ends rather than means.

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to analyze the general perceptions of the secondary school principals concerning the staff development program implemented by the school district and to identify predominate "schools of thought" embraced by the principals.

Comments which conveyed the general perception of the principals have been organized into five areas: (1) expectations of the staff development program; (2) time required to implement/promote/supervise the staff development program; (3) the degree to which they received training and support to supervise the staff development program; (4) unexpected outcomes; and (5) any additional comments not covered in the other categories.

General Perceptions

Expectations: What do principals expect to happen as a result of staff development programs? All 12 principals had different expectations as to what the staff development program was designed to do. For example, one principal expected the program to develop a common language, while another expected the program to reduce discipline problems. Some of the principals questioned the value of the staff development program, especially as it related to the concept of individualization of instruction.

Time: Were staff development activities demanding more time? This staff development program, in addition to other staff development programs designed to change the role of the principal, had placed an added burden on the principal's time. Traditional expectations, such as community leadership, were suffering from lack of attention. Paperwork had increased, and much of it was seen as duplication.

Support and Training: Did the district provide adequate training, and did it provide for expected changes? All of the principals felt that they had every opportunity to participate in the planning and development of the staff development program; many chose not to because of added duties.

Unexpected Outcomes: What happened as a result of the staff development program that wasn't expected? Principals were under so much pressure because of the emphasis on instructional leadership that they had developed a tendency to overreact causing them to not see the relationship between what was expected from the program and other routine duties. Nevertheless, because of increased requirements associated with supervision, improvement was observed in how teachers taught and in the overall discipline of students in the school.

Additional Comments: What wasn't covered in the interview? Principals did not feel as though they were receiving the same consideration afforded the teachers. Every effort was being made in the district to see that due process was available for professional employees, but due process wasn't *really* available for administrators. Principals also felt that the central office expectations for the principal as instructional leader was "out of touch" with the real needs of secondary schools and the role of the principal.

Schools of Thought

Comments/statements/concerns voiced by the principals in five categories were classified according to the school of thought they represented. Table 1 represents the summary of this analysis of the interview data.

Table 1

The Distribution of Schools of Thought by Interview Categories

Schools of Thought	Expectations	Time	Support & Training	Unexpected Outcomes	Additional Comments	Total
Scientific Management (ScM)	2	8	2	2	3	17
Human Relations (HR)	3	1	2	2	2	10
Socio-technical (ST)	0	1	1	0	3	5
Organizational Development (OD)	3	0	4	4	1	12
Micro-economics (M)	0		0	0	0	0
Goal Attainment (GA)	2	1	1	1	0	6
Systems Model (SyM)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Integrated Model (IM)	1	0	2	0	0	3
Total	12	11*	12	9*	9*	

* All principals did not respond.

Expectations: What do principals expect to happen as a result of staff development programs? The expectations that principals held for the staff development program were nearly equally distributed in four schools of thought: (1) scientific management; (2) human relations; (3) organizational development; and (4) goal attainment. This confirms that principals had different views of what would constitute effectiveness.

Time: Were staff development activities demanding more time? Eight of the 12 principals raised concerns about conditions of employment that reflected control and efficiency (scientific management). These principals were very concerned about the time that was needed and expected to satisfy district staff development demands. This concern ranged from the principal who reported having to reallocate 35% of his time to staff development concerns, to the principal who just indicated that he couldn't spend "as much time as required." Clearly, principals felt that the effectiveness of the staff development program could be judged by how a principal spends his time.

Support and Training: Did the district provide adequate training, and did it provide support for expected changes? The statements generated by principals related to support and training were distributed much more evenly across the schools of thought. The staff development programs were viewed by principals as having satisfied a variety of needs. It was not possible to determine whether the district staff developers had planned to create this condition, or whether it grew out of the perceptions of the principals. Nine of the twelve principals viewed the training they had received as adequate to exceptional. Three principals felt that graduate work and other special programs, such as the Danforth

program for principals, were more beneficial. One principal didn't think any program could "help to train a principal to administer an alternative high school."

Unexpected Outcomes: What happened as a result of the staff development program that wasn't expected? The statements generated by principals in this category are distributed across the four schools of thought. The nine principals who responded had differing points of view. For example, one principal was pleasantly surprised that "his teachers" were very positive about the experiences received. Another principal saw the teachers as sharing a "common bond," and felt that they were "creating social events that bring teachers from different high schools together periodically." Other principals said that a "fearful climate has been created because of the increase in classroom observations and conferences."

The principals appeared to be surprised by what they determined to be unexpected outcomes. They reported that "more teachers are talking about instruction than ever before," and "teachers feel better about students."

Additional Comments: What wasn't covered in the interview? The comments made by the principals in this area fall in the first four schools of thought. Questions/concerns/comments related to efficiency and control, interfacing with individuals, a blend of scientific and human relations, and internal processes. Comments in this area ranged from "all the training received is superficial because the training is mostly for elementary personnel" to "most reports coming back from teachers about staff development are positive."

The most frequently mentioned concern had to do with the principals' perceptions of the central office staff. Six of the nine principals

responding to this question felt that the central office either "doesn't remember what it's like to be a principal," or "they don't understand the role of the secondary school principal."

Summary. When totaling across schools of thoughts, scientific management (17) and organizational development (12) dominated the principals' effectiveness focus. This suggests that the concerns of the principals were related to control and efficiency and communications and teamwork. Concerns such as the amount of time devoted to supervision, observations, and conferencing teachers to the detriment of being visable to students and the community preoccupied the principals. Questions/concerns about the apparent lack of understanding of the role of the principal, and the view that the expectations for them were unreal dominated their thinking.

Secondary school principals viewed their job as complex and very much related to the scientific management school of thought (e.g., control and efficiency). In addition, they viewed sound organizational practices such as good inter-organizational/institutional communications and teamwork as contributing to the efficient management and control of their school. Aspects of effectiveness that moved away from their vision were seen as obstacles that were non-productive. Principals seemed to view a good school as one that has good communication and teamwork, and provides for interfacing between individuals and the organization. Anything that detracted from this condition was viewed as unproductive.

DISCUSSION

The effectiveness focus of the principals tended to be primarily that of the school of scientific management as noted in Table 1. Making the system work, making the organization run, was a primary concern. Their work day was a sum of discrete incidents and entities, an orderly process only in the temporal, chronological sense. Eight principals appeared to conceive of time as a commodity to be used to create a smooth running organization, rather than a commodity to be used in the restructuring of tasks. Principals saw the new demands as infringements on the time needed for the really important tasks of student control, public relations, and student safety.

The weathered levels of Frederick Taylor (1914) (scientific management) did not, however, totally explain the responses of the principals. There were parallel concerns for group linkages, teaming, and good communication, i.e., concerns which more easily translate into a focus on organizational development. Principals were interested in the internal processes within the organization that contribute to the efficient operation of the school. Finally, concern about the feelings, perceptions, and attitudes of teachers represented a third factor for the principals. The human relations school of thought had some importance in the hierarchy of responses of the principals.

What appears to be the mixing of apples and oranges in how the principals responded vis-a-vis the three schools of thought noted above may be explained in acknowledging/recognizing how these principals carried out their responsibilities. The principal as organizational manager, responsible for data collection, statistics, and other "things," responded

Table 2

The Distribution of Schools of Thought by Interview Categories in Relation to Twelve Secondary School Principals

Principal	Expectations	Time	Support/ Training	Unexpected Outcomes	Additional Comments
A	OD	GA	GA	OD	OD
B	GA	ScM	HR	GA	ScM
C	OD	HR	ST	ScM	ST
D	IM	ScM	OD	--	ScM
E	HR	ST	OD	--	ScM
F	ScM	--	IM	--	--
G	ScM	ScM	IM	OD	HR
H	HR	ScM	ST	--	--
I	GA	ScM	OD	OD	ST
J	HR	ScM	ST	HR	--
K	GA	ScM	OD	HR	ST
L	OD	ScM	HR	OD	HR

ScM Scientific Management

HR Human Relations

ST Sociotechnical

OD Organizational Development

M Microeconomic

GA Goal Attainment

SyM Systems Model

IM Integrated Model

to superordinate requests as would any bureaucrat. Getzels (1968) would have attributed the response to the nomothetic dimension of the formal organization. On the other hand, these principals worked with people -- students, teachers, and others. In this context, the principals took a less technical, formal view of the organization. Principals interacted with people and the interactions consumed most of their time. This, the perspective of human relations is a natural one. Teachers must be kept satisfied, or at least kept from being dissatisfied. A satisfied teacher is an effective teacher - maybe not for the organization, but certainly for the principal. The dilemma is best understood by paraphrasing the thoughts of one principal.

> Central office wants this, wants that. Not now but yesterday. They're the boss, they pay the freight. So they get it. But hey! I have to work all day, every day with the teachers. I have to keep them happy too.

Principals recognize the need to create a climate whereby instruction and learning can proceed in an orderly fashion. Role changes that demand the time away from what principals consider to be duties that create a well run organization represent a temporary distraction that they hope will go away sooner than later.

It seems to us that the strong presence of an organizational development focus on the part of the principals had more to do with the district's staff development program than with a business-as-usual profile of principals. The staff development programs stresses district wide concern for a similar teaching format, a similar set of achievement outcomes, and similar expectations for how principals observe and supervise teachers. It appears as though the principals have generated some concerns

for intergroup linkages, teamwork and employee self-development. Absent the staff development programs, we believe that the organizational development school of thought would certainly have held less importance and priority because these principals, like others in large urban high schools, appear to be more concerned about their own school than they are about overall problems of the district.

What did we really learn from 24 plus hours of discussions with the 12 principals? Theory was not as important to the principals as it was to us. These principals did reflect, they did abstract, to the extent that it was practical and useful for their own functioning. Generalizability typically stopped at the schoolhouse door. If something worked, it worked. What was self-evident needed no additional proof.

We learned that perceptions of principals, generated by an interview, can be categorized by schools of thought. More work is needed in this area to validate the system, however. We learned that principals view the world according to how they determine effectiveness and, if staff development programs are to have any lasting effects for principals and teachers, ways must be found to deal with how principals view effectiveness.

These 12 principals are hard-headed realists about their own skills, strengths, and weaknesses. They had concerns about the efficacy and processes of the many staff development programs. Their concerns derived from the foot soldier's experience on the march and in the trenches. What was immediate, simple to grasp, and "do-able" was their practical rule of thumb test of reality. All had a solid operational grasp of what Wieck (1978) described as the loosely-coupled nature of schools. They knew full well that between the tight coupling of the administrative system and the

loose coupling of the instructional system they were the link holding the organization together. It seemed to us that as the superintendent tightened up on the instructional or professional system by standardizing goals and requiring common instructional modes, the principals got no relief through any "slack" in the administrative system. They actually believed that their burdens and stresses had increased from both the administrative and instructional sides since the inception of the staff development programs. They experienced enormous strain, the wear and tear of performing the linking function, feelings not adequately described in the dispassionate propositions of theory, or understood in the terms of loose coupling. They were also slyly aware that the reward for greater competence was often the burden of additional responsibilities.

School of Thought	Effectiveness Focus
Scientific Management	Views organizations as a closed, rational systems and workers as simple and passive resources. Organizational efficiency defines effectiveness. Motion and time studies are examples of data gathering.
Human Relations	Takes a less technical view of organizations. Interfacing is valued (between individuals and organization): a satisfied worker equals production. Concerned about attitudes, feelings and working conditions.
Sociotechnical	A blend of scientific management and human relations. This school of thought recognizes the dysfunction of neglecting either. This movement fails to make connections between the two schools however.
Organizational Development	Focuses on the internal processes within the organization as the basis for effectiveness. Intergroup linkages, open communications, team work, encourage employee self development.
Microeconomics	Overview. Profit and return on investment. Effectiveness is determined by cost- effectiveness processes.
Goal attainment	Effectiveness is viewed in terms of ends rather than the means to an end. All organizations have a set of goals and that the ultimate goal can be identified and progress toward it can be measured.
Systems Model	Focus is on means needed to achieve an end. Recognizes the interdependency among and between different groups - concerned with maintaining and adapting functions.
Ecology Integrated Model	Effectiveness is defined/determined by the systems ability to satisfy (minimally) multiple constitiences based on the relative power of organization subgroups.

Figure 1

Eight Schools of Thought

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